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Background Statement

Growing up in Rhode Island had its benefits especially with our education system. Looking back to middle school, our school’s core belief was to set each student up to be a positive contributor to today’s society. Whether it was to go to graduate and go to college or to enter the working force. We would use profiler tests and skill tests to see what our strengths were. Based on those strengths we could get an idea what jobs were out there for us based on our traits. Profilers are great ways to get students thinking about their future.

My parents believed very heavily in my education. They would continuously push me to better myself, study harder and not to give up. They set a strong foundation on what they expected and when I did not reach them they would take action. If we got anything lower than a C or had more than one C we would be grounded or they would lock the TV for the week. Those punishments seemed like the end of the world when I was younger but I can now understand why they have done it. They always wanted the best for me and I appreciate what they have done. My parents always stressed the demands in the real world. They always told me that more now than ever diplomas and higher education is needed to get a well-paying job to support a family. They always kept me in line and I am thankful for that. I now understand why education is so important in the world and I hope other students going through the process has the same realization as I did. The expectations of the business world were to just get your diploma and attend college and that’s still the same.

Looking back throughout elementary, middle and high school I had moderate expectations for myself. I could make it through school without having to study and rarely do homework. I was lucky, which helped me get involved with basketball where I played all four years in high school. My own expectations were to stay active and pass my classes. Then when I reached my senior year my expectations changed. I wanted to finish and present my graduation portfolio early. I finished 3 months early and got my presentation out of my way. Then I helped other students revise their work and helped them graduate. During this time, is another reason why I want to become a teacher. I realized how much I love helping people. So I decided to apply to colleges and got into all of my choices. My new expectations were to attend a higher education school where I could pursue a degree in either mathematics or education. I currently doing both so I believe I am exceeding my expectations.

During my whole education, the classrooms were all moderately the same. When we come in, there are 2 sides of the room, with rows of 3 chairs each. The board would be on one side of the classroom in the middle and the teachers desk would be in the middle on the other side. I actually liked the setup in the room and it was assessable to everyone. There were two doors leading into the hallway for easy access and exit and an emergency exit in every other room.

The teachers at my school were not very creative with their teaching styles. I only remember a few times when they would explore Co-Teaching options. The would try One Teach and One Assist. I believe that was very suitable for most of my class structure. If we were working on an assignment or taking notes, the teacher assisting could come up and help us understand what we were doing. Another instance, if a student needed to go to the bathroom, the teacher that was assisting could catch the student up quickly, instead of the student being stuck. I did encounter station teaching with a student teacher in my algebra class where they would work with system of equations and solve them with elimination and substitution. Which worked well. Both of these strategies met my standards but I wish they would have done more styles like that to keep me more engaged.

Thinking back, one of my most influential teachers I had was Mr. McM. He was my 7th and 8th grade science teacher. He would start the class out with a think problem where you would have to think logically at a problem, write down your answer and put all the answers in a hat. He would pull one out, if they had it right he would give us a choice of a prize. If it was wrong, he would keep picking until one was right. He also let us chose our projects we wanted to do and was flexible with the assignment. We also went outside and gathered data and went on kayaking trips and collected data on the lake. It was one of my most memorable classes I took in my educational career.

There was a lot of diversity in my school, especially from being near a city. We had Hispanic, Asian, Korean and German students. Our school was very open to everyone. We also encountered a lot of families in the area that were host families for foreign exchange students. It was great to understand and learn their culture. I met a friend that I still am in contact today with named Tae Moon Kim, from Korea and he tells me about what’s going on in their country. Exploring and welcoming diversity is very important and can really help students feel more welcomed if they are not accustomed to our culture. We need to find a way to combine it and our school did their best to welcome and explore their culture. As well as introduce ours to theirs.

Our school days were structured by green and white days. We would have 4 classes a day. It was a good setup for me because I personally felt like shorter classes restricted me from really connecting with the content. With these long blocks I could really understand what was going on and helped me get all my work done in class. We would be able to pick our electives we would take and the school would make our schedule based on those classes and electives we chose. If you wanted to take honors or AP, then you would need to get a signature from the teacher that was going to be instructing it. I took a lot of AP and Honors courses, the were the same material just more discussion based which I loved. I believe I received a great education from my school district.

My background will affect me if I teach in a school in the city or one that is poverty driven because I have not encountered that in my educational career. It is hard to deal with and understand, after seeing the effects in my practicum placement. Seeing some students not showering, wearing the same clothes to school and not having a lunch take a toll on you. I need to find ways to try and connect with these students and help them strive in the classroom.

I selected teaching as a profession because I want to be able for students to see how fun education can be and how powerful it is. I started to see how fun it was during my last few years in high school and I want them to have the same realizations as I did. I want to help students understand themselves while figuring out life. It’s a rigid process and I want to be a positive role model for them. Especially for students that come from a rough background.

To be a superior teacher, I need to be patient, willing to try new things, be flexible, understanding and mostly show the students how to have fun. I believe if I can have all of these qualities, the students will enjoy coming to my class. You can’t be over serious all the time, the students need to unwind a little bit. So it is my job to mix the content with real world situations, outdoor actives and visuals to keep everyone happy. Who wants to hear a lecture for a whole class? I remember I would fall asleep. So I don’t want to put my students through that. I will work on planning strategies to implement these ideas into my lessons by extensive planning and listening to my student’s hobbies, interests and ideas. By doing all of this, I hope to gain self-achievement in helping students enjoy learning and succeeding in post school life. It is all about the students.

I have many fears entering this profession which is completely normal. I am nervous that some students will take advantage of my kindness, or the students will not always listen which will be hard to control. I know not to send students out of the class, so I need to find out strategies to keep the class in control, and ways not to get to the point where I need to send a student out. I also am afraid that some students will not want to learn regardless if it is interesting or not. A lot of students are set on dropping out or just planning on working with their family post-graduation. All they want are life skills to get them through to join the working class. I hope my teaching styles will persuade students to come to class.